

THE ULSTER DEFENCE REGIMENT AND ITS INSIGNIA

by Gary Gibbs

The Regiment came into being, as a result of the civil unrest of the late 1960s in Northern Ireland with the RUC coming under extreme pressure. This led to the deployment of the Army onto the streets. On 3rd October 1969 the Hunt Report commissioned by the Government of Northern Ireland was published. It recommended that the Royal Ulster Constabulary "should be relieved of all duties of a military nature as soon as possible". Further; a "locally recruited part-time force, under the control of the General Officer Commanding Northern Ireland, should be raised" and "together with a police volunteer reserve, should replace the Ulster Special Constabulary".

The British Government accepted the findings of the Hunt Report and published a white paper and a bill on 12th November 1969. The Ulster Defence Regiment was raised by an Act of Parliament in 1970. At the time it was the largest infantry regiment in the British Army, with a strength of 6,000 men, consisting of full and part time soldiers. It was recommended that each battalion should have a mobile force of two platoons transported in Land Rovers fitted for radios, its task was to support the regular forces, protecting the borders and the state infrastructure against attack and sabotage. It was also to undertake guard duties at key points and installations, carry out patrols and establishing check points and road blocks.

From its earliest days, patrols sometimes deployed in private cars and patrol commanders had to carry loose change so they could report in from telephone kiosks because of the inadequate range of the first radios. As the Regiment's operational efficiency increased it assume responsibility for 85 per cent of security in the Province. Many of the soldiers were veterans of earlier campaigns with the British Army or had been in the Special Constabulary and were middle-aged; this earned them the public nickname of "Dad's Army".

Initially the Regiment raised seven battalions: 1st (County Antrim); 2nd (County Armagh); 3rd (County Down); 4th (County Fermanagh); 5th (County Londonderry); 6th (County Tyrone) and 7th (City of Belfast). During 1972, four additional battalions were raised: 8th (County Tyrone); 9th (County Antrim); 10th (City of Belfast) and 11th (Craigavon). By the end of 1972 the Regiment's strength stood at 9,200 all ranks.

In 1984 the number of battalions were reduced with the amalgamations in 1st (County Antrim) and 9th (County Antrim) to create 1st/9th (County Antrim) and 7th and 10th (City of Belfast) to create the 7th /10th (city of Belfast). The Regiment retained nine battalions until 1991 when 2 UDR and 11 UDR amalgamated as 2nd/11th Battalion, The Ulster Defence Regiment, and 4 and 6 UDR became 4th/6th Battalion.

Female soldiers were introduced into the Regiment in 1973, firstly to carry out searching of females. Their role progressed and they were fully integrated and played a part in the Regiment's operational role. They became known affectionately as Greenfinches.

The Regiment had its own depot and training establishment at Ballykinler.

In 1991 four battalions of the Regiment were presented with Colours at Lisburn by Her Majesty The Queen. The remaining battalions received their Colours before The Ulster Defence Regiment became part of The Royal Irish Regiment. The first Colonel Commandant was General Sir John Anderson GCB, KCB DSO and the first

Regimental Commander, Brigadier Logan Scott-Bowden CBE DSO OBE MC & Bar. Regimental Headquarters was set up in Thiepval Barracks, Lisburn.

Recruitment began on 1st January, advertisements were placed in local newspapers, information leaflet and application forms could be obtained at local army barracks, TA Centres, post offices, police stations and libraries. A television commercial was also produced. Applicants had to produce two references and all were put through CIB (Criminal Investigation Branch) security checks.

On 13th January 1970 training majors from the regular army were appointed. Their job was to raise each battalion and have it ready for duty by 1st April. Each was assisted by a regular army Quartermaster, a Corporal Clerk, a Civil Service Clerical Officer to act as Chief Clerk and a typist. For each battalion there was a minimum requirement of: one Lieutenant Colonel, six Majors, seven captains and 25 Lieutenants. The minimum number of NCOs required consisted of: one RSM, seven Warrant Officers 2nd Class, 25 Sergeants, 25 Corporals and 25 Lance Corporals. To recruit suitable company officers Scott-Bowden was obliged to award instant commissions to people deemed suitable. Candidates were sought in a number of different areas: university Officers' Training Corps and Army Cadet Force, the Territorial Army, the Navy, the Royal Air Force, the Royal Marines, the Indian Army and even the United States Army. A balance was sought in equal numbers of both Protestant/Catholic officers, by March 1971 only 18 Catholic officers had been recruited.

The Regiment created its own newspaper titled "Defence". Commanders were able to communicate their views through this as well as through Part 2 Orders (routine orders) which were displayed on company notice boards and through other normal communication channels.

During its lifetime The Ulster Defence Regiment lost 257 soldiers due to terrorist activities.

From its inception, the regiment had to use World War II weaponry and wear old army uniforms. When this was eventually sorted out, camouflage jackets were worn and headgear was a distinctive green beret. Its badge was a brass "Maid of Erin" harp, surmounted by St Edward's Crown, as time progressed the Regiment wore a blackend version, in line with most of the rest of the Army when in Northern Ireland. The badge was a direct copy of the Royal Ulster Rifles cap badge with the Latin motto removed from its base. The Greenfinches wore combat jackets and dark green skirts with the green beret and cap badge. For ceremonial occasions men wore No 2 Service Dress and for ladies a dark green jacket and skirt. The beret was retained as headgear for men and women in No 1 Dress. On the formation of operations platoons, narrow coloured slides were adopted and worn on the shoulder straps in battalion colours. Later on they were replaced by battalion epaulette slides.

UDR Badges
Photograph Number 1

Rank slides black on olive green

- (1) *Other rank HQ UDR, 1 UDR, 2 UDR, 3 UDR, 4 UDR, 5 UDR, 6 UDR, 7 UDR.*
(2) *8 UDR, 9 UDR, 10 UDR, 11 UDR, 1/9 UDR, 7/10 UDR, 2/11 UDR AND 4/6 UDR.*

HQ UDR Officers slip on titles

- (3) *Captain, (4) Major (5) Brigadier, (6) Lieutenant Colonel, (7) Colonel.*
(8) *Ulster Defence Regiment titles, red lettering on black. (9) Brigadiers Gorget patches, (10) Brigadiers Embroidered cap badge.*
(11) *Pipers white metal Pouch Numerals: 1 UDR, 2 UDR, 3 UDR, 4 UDR, 5 UDR, 6 UDR, 7 UDR, 8 UDR, 9 UDR, 10 UDR, 11 UDR, 1/9 UDR, 7/10 UDR.*
(12) *No 2 Dress buttons large and small. (13) Mess Dress buttons anodised aluminium. (14) Officers Service Dress cap buttons, silver and gilt. (15) Original Officer Service Dress cap buttons (Irish Guards), anodised aluminium. (16) 'R' Retired Officers Mess and No 2 Dress buttons, gilt.*

- (17) *Officers collar badges, gilt. (18) Officers Service Dress cap badge, gilt (lugs). (19) Other Ranks collar badges anodised aluminium. (20) All ranks cap badge anodised aluminium. (21) Pipers embroidered ceremonial tunic badge. (22) Drummers No 1 Dress embroidered badge. (23) First official Officers embroidered beret badge (early 1980s). (24) First embroidered badge early 1970s 'H' Company, 6 UDR, unofficial, Brigadier ordered it to be removed. (25) Final Officers embroidered beret badge (late 1980s), (26) Officers and NCOs Mess Dress embroidered collar badges. (27) Brass cap badge introduced to 8 UDR by its commanding officer early 1980s for use by Officers and senior NCOs. Although unofficial, the Battalion were permitted to continue to wear the badge. (28) Drummers No 2 Dress badge. (29) Pipers No 2 Dress badge. (30) Pipers waist belt clasp. (31) Pipers caubeen badge, gilt. (32) Pipe Major's badge (Shirt Sleeve Order), white metal (33) Drum Majors badge (Shirt Sleeve Order), white metal. (34) Pipers plaid brooch, gilt. (35) Other Ranks wait belt clasp, white metal with a brass harp. (36) Drum Majors No 2 Dress badge. (37) Female NCOs service dress rank badges, black on red. Lance Corporals to WO2. (38) Depot UDR, a green patch worn by recruits not taught to salute. (39) Recruiting Sergeants No 2 Dress badge of rank, gold on red. (40) Red coloured patch worn by part time recruits in 3 UDR not taught to salute. (41) Pipe Majors No 2 Dress badge.*

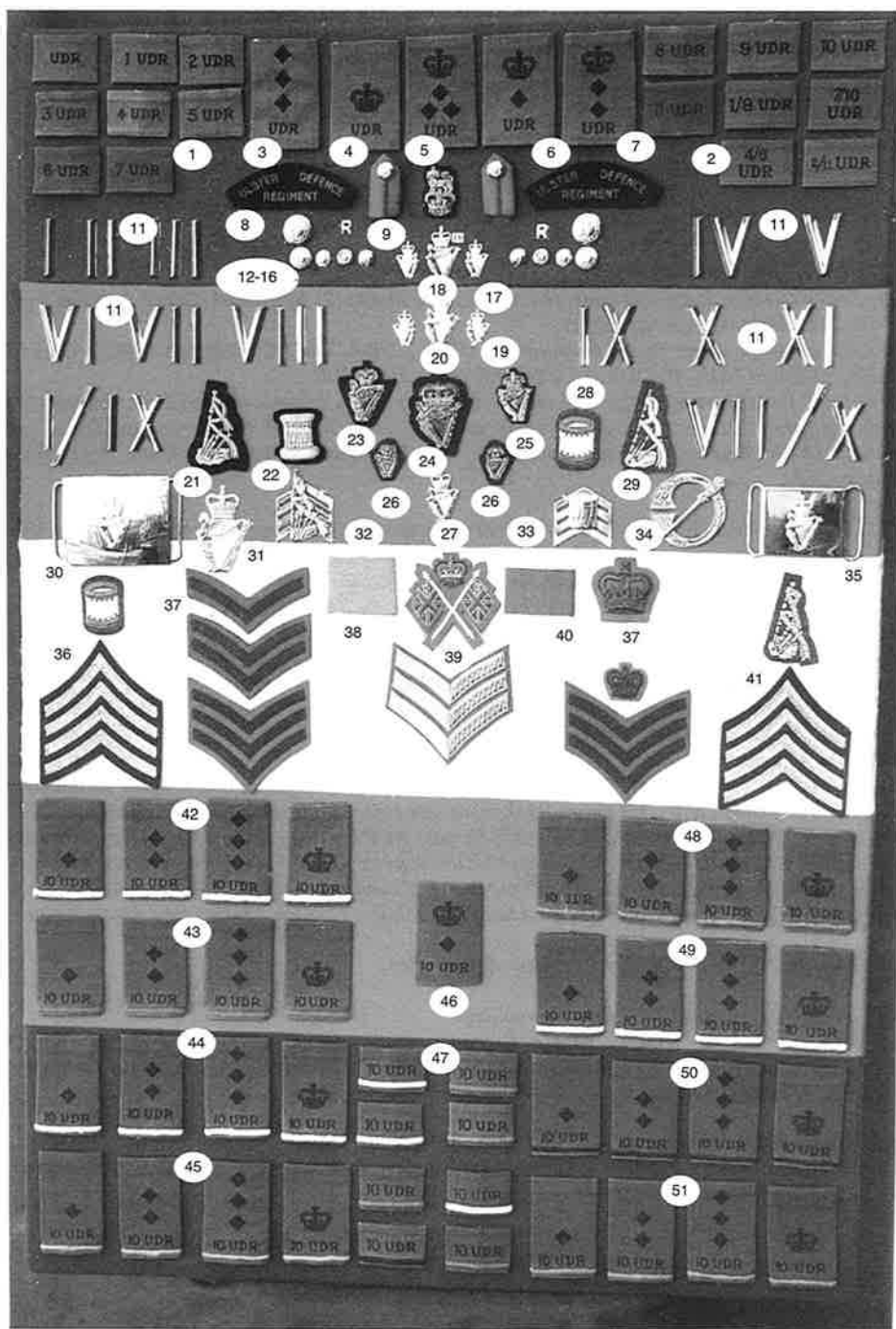
10 UDR Officers and Other Ranks colour slip on titles

Officers with a coloured bar at the bottom edge

- (42) *A Company, (light blue). (43) B Company, (red). (44) C Company, (yellow). (45) D Company, (dark blue). (48) E Company, (green). (49) F Company, (white). (50) G Company, (black). (51) HQ Company, (orange). (46) Commanding Officer.*

Other Ranks the colour bar follows that of the officers

- (47) *A Company, B Company, C Company, D Company, E Company, F Company, G Company, HQ Company.*



Photograph Number 2

Officers slip on titles worn from approximately 1975 to disbandment, all black on olive green

<i>Battalion</i>	<i>Location</i>
<i>(1) 7th Battalion</i>	<i>County Down</i>
<i>(2) 8th Battalion</i>	<i>County Tyrone</i>
<i>(3) 9th Battalion</i>	<i>County Antrim</i>
<i>(4) 11th Battalion</i>	<i>County Armagh</i>
<i>(5) 1/9th Battalion</i>	<i>County Antrim</i>
<i>(6) 7/10th Battalion</i>	<i>County Antrim/Down</i>
<i>(7) 4/6th Battalion</i>	<i>County Fermanagh /Tyrone</i>

Officers Service Dress Insignia

(8) Second Lieutenant, (9) Lieutenant, (10) Captain, (11) Major, (12) Lieutenant Colonel, (13) Colonel, (14) Brigadier.

No 2 Dress Male Rank Insignia

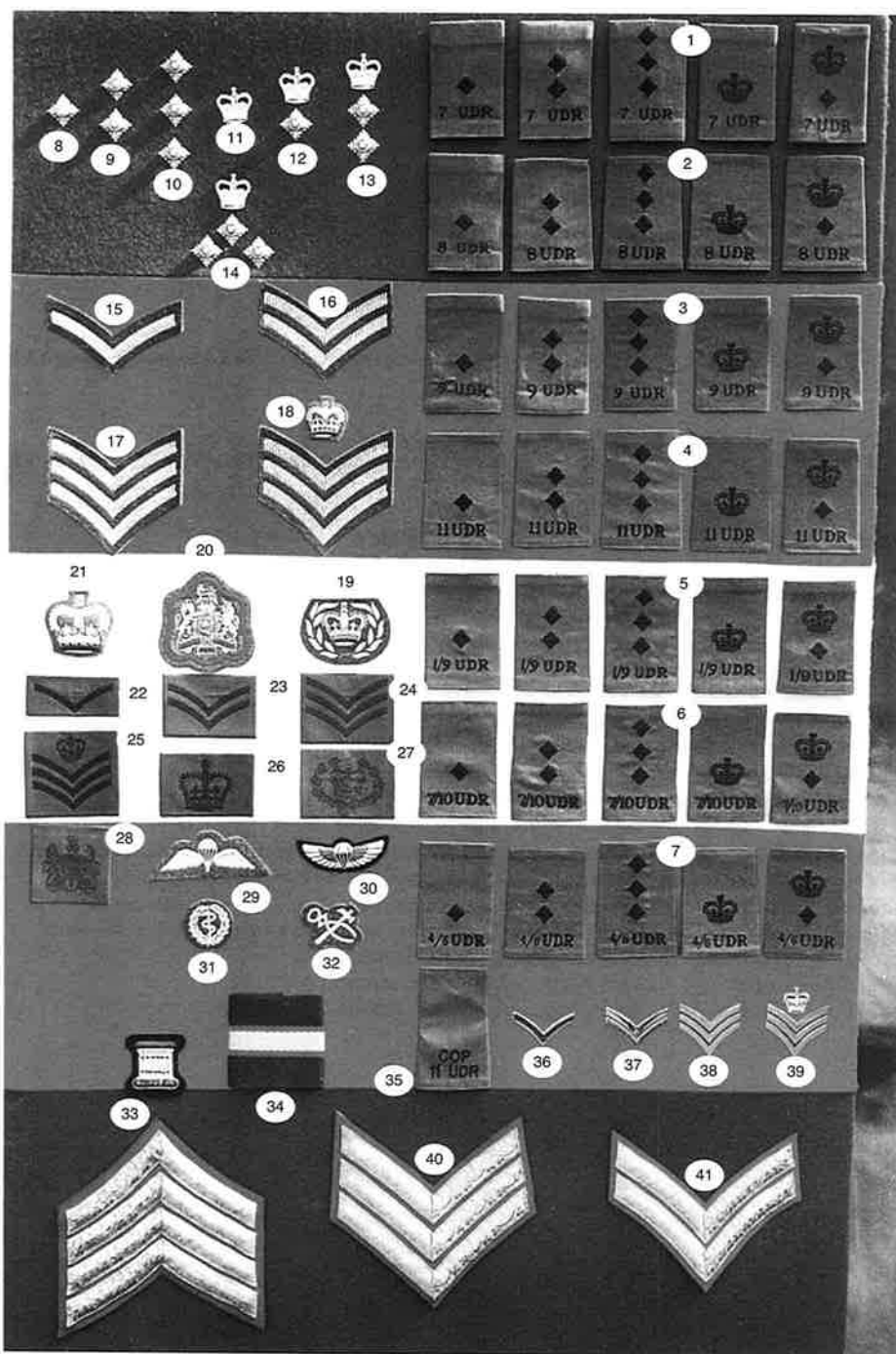
(15) Lance Corporal, (16) Corporal, (17) Sergeant, (18) Colour Sergeant, (19) RQMS, (20) RSM, red border to Royal Arms, (21) WO2.

DPM Combat, Senior NCOs Rank Insignia worn 1970s.

(22) Lance Corporal, (23) Corporal, (24) Sergeant, (25) Colour Sergeant, (26) WO2, (27) RQMS, (28) RSM.

Trade and Rank Badges

- (29) Parachute Wings No 2 Dress*
- (30) Special Air Service No 3 Dress/Combat Dress*
- (31) No 2 Dress (Male) Medical Trained*
- (32) No 2 Dress (Male) Armourer Trained*
- (33) Drum Major No 1 Dress*
- (34) Male regimental stable belt, black/red/yellow/red/black.*
- (35) 11 UDR Close Observation Platoon, late 1980 to early 1992*
- (36) Lance Corporal Cook, Close Observation Platoon, late 1980 to early 1992, white metal*
- (37) Corporal Cook, Close Observation Platoon, late 1980 to early 1992, white metal*
- (38) Sergeant Cook, Close Observation Platoon, late 1980 to early 1992, white metal*
- (39) Staff Sergeant Cook, Close Observation Platoon, late 1980 to early 1992, white metal*
- (40) Drum Major No 1 Dress blues, gold on red chevrons*
- (41) Band Sergeant No 1 Dress blues, gold on red chevrons*
- (42) Band Corporal No 1 Dress blues, gold on red chevrons*



Photograph Number 3

Officers slip on tiles, worn from approximately 1975 to disbandment all black on olive green.

Battalion Location

- (1) 1st Battalion County Antrim*
- (2) 2nd Battalion County Armagh*
- (3) 3rd Battalion County Down*
- (4) 4th Battalion County Fermanagh*
- (5) 5th Battalion County Londonderry*
- (6) 6th Battalion County Tyrone*
- (7) 2/11th Battalion County Armagh*

Combat Slides worn mid 1970s, golden colour on woodland camouflage DPM.

- (8) Second Lieutenant, (9) Lieutenant, (10) Captain, (11) Major, (12) Lieutenant Colonel.*

Colour slides Worn by 7th UDR, from 1973-75 worn above slip on tiles and then faded from use for no particular reason.

- (13) A Company, (blue). (14) B Company, (red). (15) C Company, (yellow). (16) D Company, (green), (17) E Company, (black). (18) Signal Platoon (blue/white/blue) attached to A Company, (19) Potential Officers, (white). No colour title was made for HQ Company.*

Shirt Sleeve Order Rank Insignia

- (20) Lance Corporal, white on stone colour. (21) Corporal, white on stone colour. (22) Sergeant, white on stone colour. (23) Colour Sergeant, white on stone colour. (24) RQMS, white metal. (25) RSM, white metal. (26) WO2, white metal.*

Trade and Rank Badges

- (27) Greenfinch No 2 Dress Medical Trained, black on red*
- (28) Greenfinch No 2 Dress B Trade, black on red*
- (29) Greenfinch No 2 Dress Signal Trained, black on red*
- (30) All Ranks Medical Trained Shirt Sleeve Order, white metal*
- (31) Mess Dress Parachute Wings, gold on red*
- (32) Mess Dress Marksman Badge, gold on red*
- (33) No 2 Dress (Male) Marksman*
- (34) No 2 Dress (Male) B Tradesman*
- (35) No 2 Dress (Male) Signal Trained*
- (36) No 2 Dress (Male) Physical Training Staff*
- (37) No 2 Dress (Male) Driver*
- (38) Band WO2, worn on No 1 Dress blues*
- (39) Lance Corporal piper/drummer, worn on No 1 Dress, pipers on green tunic, gold on red chevron.*
- (40) Colour Sergeant piper/drummer, worn on No 1 Dress, pipers on green tunic, gold on red chevrons.*
- (41) Pipe Major worn on green ceremonial tunic, gold on red chevrons.*

